AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An electrolyte membrane comprising a porous substrate, wherein pores of the substrate are filled with a first polymer having proton conductivity, and the porous substrate is comprised of a second polymer which is at least one selected from the group consisting of polyimides and aromatic polyamides,

wherein the porous substrate has a network structure which is composed of polymer phase and void phase [[in]] inside thereof and forming microscopic continuous holes, and the porous substrate has a porous structure in both surfaces, [[and]]

wherein the porous substrate has an average pore diameter of 0.01 to 1 μm, and

wherein the porous substrate has a heat resistant temperature of 200°C or higher and a thermal shrinkage ratio of ±1% or less in case of the thermal treatment at 105°C for 8 hours.

2. (Currently amended) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein the porous substrate is comprised of at least one polymer selected from aromatic polyimides.

3. (Currently amended) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein the porous substrate is comprised of at least one polymer selected from aromatic polyamides.

4. (Currently amended) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein the porous substrate has ~~an average pore diameter: 0.01 to 1 μm;~~ a porosity: 20 to 80%, and a thickness: 5 to 300 μm.

5-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein one end of the first polymer is bound to the inner surface of the pores of the substrate.

8. (Previously presented) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein the pores of the substrate are further filled with a third polymer having proton conductivity.

9. (Currently amended) [[An]] <u>The</u> electrolyte membrane ~~comprising a porous substrate, wherein pores of the substrate are filled w ith a first polymer having proton conductivity, the porous substrate is comprised of a second polymer which is at least one selected from the group consisting of polyimides and aromatic polyamides, and~~ <u>according to Claim 1, wherein</u> the porous substrate has a ratio of change in surface area of about 1% or less between the dry state and the wet state at 25°C[[,]]

~~wherein the porous substrate has a network structure which is composed of polymer phase and void phase in inside thereof and forming microscopic continuous holes, and the porous substrate has a porous structure in both surfaces, and~~

~~wherein the porous substrate has an average pore diameter of 0.01 to 1μm~~.

10. (Original) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 9, wherein the electrolyte membrane has a proton conductivity of not lower than 0.001 S/cm and not higher than 10.0 S/cm at 25°C and 100% humidity.

11. (Previously presented) A fuel cell comprising the electrolyte membrane according to claim 1.

12. (Previously presented) A solid polymer fuel cell comprising the electrolyte membrane according to claim 1.

13. (Previously presented) A direct methanol solid polymer fuel cell comprising the electrolyte membrane according to claim 1.

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[PLLC]
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

14. (Currently amended) A method for producing an electrolyte membrane which comprises a porous, polyimide or aromatic polyamide substrate filled with an electrolytic substance, wherein the electrolytic substance is a monomer composing a polymer having proton conductivity; and the method has a step of filling the monomer into pores of the membrane, and heating the monomer to polymerize the monomer,

wherein the porous substrate has a network structure which is composed of polymer phase and void phase [[in]] inside thereof and forming microscopic continuous holes, and the porous substrate has a porous structure in both surfaces, [[and]]

wherein the porous substrate has an average pore diameter of 0.01 to 1 μm, and

wherein the porous substrate has a heat resistant temperature of 200°C or higher and a thermal shrinkage ratio of ±1% or less in case of the thermal treatment at 105°C for 8 hours.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein after the step of heating the monomer to polymerize the monomer, the method further repeats the steps of filling and heating at least once, thereby filling ratio of a filling material being controlled.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 14 comprising a combination of the step of heating the monomer to polymerize, and one step selected from the following (X-1) to (X-4) steps or combinations of two steps, or three, or all of these steps, thereby filling the pores of the membrane with the electrolytic substance; and/or after the step of filling the pores of the membrane with electrolytic substance, and following (Y-1) step and/or (Y-2) step:

(X-1) a step of making the porous membrane hydrophilic and immersing the porous membrane in a monomer or its solution;

(X-2) a step of adding a surfactant to a monomer or its solution to produce an immersion solution and immersing the porous membrane in the immersion solution;

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CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[PLLC]
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

(X-3) a step of reducing pressure in the state that the porous membrane is immersed in a monomer or its solution;

(X-4) a step of radiating ultrasonic wave in the state that the porous membrane is immersed in a monomer or its solution; and

(Y-1) a step of bringing a porous substrate for absorbing the electrolytic substance into contact with both surfaces of the porous membrane; and

(Y-2) a step of removing the electrolytic substance adhering to both surfaces of the porous membrane by a smooth material.

17. (Currently amended) A method for producing an electrolyte membrane which comprises a porous, polyimide or aromatic polyamide substrate filled with an electrolytic substance, wherein the electrolytic substance is a monomer composing a polymer having proton conductivity, and the method comprises a step of adding a surfactant to the monomer or its solution to produce an immersion solution; a step of heating the monomer to polymerize the monomer,

wherein the porous substrate has a network structure which is composed of polymer phase and void phase [[in]] inside thereof and forming microscopic continuous holes, and the porous substrate has a porous structure in both surfaces, [[and]]

wherein the porous substrate has an average pore diameter of 0.01 to 1 μm<u>, and</u>

<u>wherein the porous substrate has a heat resistant temperature of 200°C or higher and a thermal shrinkage ratio of ±1% or less in case of the thermal treatment at 105°C for 8 hours</u>.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the porous membrane is a material which is not substantially swollen by methanol or water.

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CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^PLLC
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein a radical polymerization initiator is further contained in the monomer or the solution, in the step of adding the surfactant.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the electrolytic substance filled in the pores has proton conductivity and is provided with a cross-linked structure by the step of heating the monomer to polymerize.

21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the electrolytic substance filled in the pores has proton conductivity and is chemically bound to the interface of the porous polyimide membrane by the step of heating the monomer to polymerize.

22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the electrolytic substance forms an electrolyte membrane having pores filled with the proton conductive polymer.

23. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the polyimide contains 3,3',4,4'-biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydride as a tetracarboxylic acid component, and oxydianiline as a diamine component, respectively.

24. (Currently amended) An electrolyte membrane for a fuel cell,

which comprises a porous, polyimide or aromatic polyamide substrate, having an average pore diameter of 0.01 to 1μm, filled with an electrolytic substance wherein the porous substrate has a network structure composed of polymer phase and void phase [[in]] inside thereof and forming microscopic continuous holes, and the porous substrate has a porous structure in both surfaces,

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CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[PLLC]
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

having no lower than 0.001 S/cm and no higher than 10.0 S/cm of a proton conductivity at 25°C in 100% humidity; no lower than 0.01 $m^2h/kg\mu m$ and no higher than 10.0 $m^2h/kg\mu m$ of a reciprocal number of methanol permeability at 25°C; and no higher than 1% of a ratio of change in surface area between dry state and wet state at 25°C, and

wherein the porous substrate has a heat resistant temperature of 200°C or higher and a thermal shrinkage ratio of ±1% or less in case of the thermal treatment at 105°C for 8 hours.

25. (Original) The electrolyte membrane for a fuel cell according to claim 24, wherein the polyimide contains 3,3',4,4'-biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydride as a tetracarboxylic acid component, and oxydianiline as a diamine component, respectively.

26. (Previously presented) An electrolyte membrane-electrode assembly comprising the electrolyte membrane for a fuel cell according to claim 24.

27. (Original) A fuel cell comprising the electrolyte membrane-electrode assembly according to claim 26.

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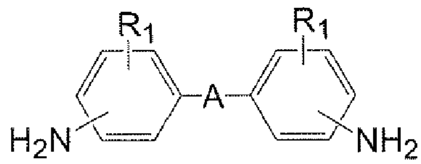
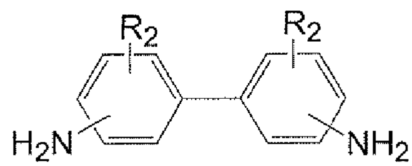
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[PLLC]
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

28. (Previously presented) The electrolyte membrane according to claim 1, wherein the polyimides are derived from biphenyltetracarboxylic acid dianhydrides as tetracarboxylic acid components and diamines selected from the group consisting of diamines represented by following general formula (1) to (3):

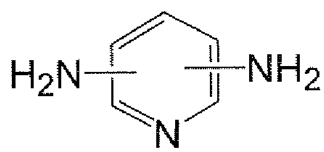


(1)

or



(2)



(3)

29. (New) The electrolyte membrane according to Claim 1, wherein the polyimide contains 3,3',4,4'-biphenyltetracarbodylic acid dianhydride as a tetracarboxylic acid component, and oxydianiline as a diamine component, respectively.

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS[PLLC]
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100